

PFOA/PFOS
(Hoosick Falls, NY)

ISSUE: PFOA/PFOS.

BACKGROUND:

- PFOA and PFOS are fluorinated organic chemicals that are part of a larger group of chemicals referred to as perfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs). PFOA and PFOS have been the most extensively produced and studied of these chemicals. Studies indicate that PFOA and PFOS can cause reproductive and developmental, liver and kidney, and immunological effects in laboratory animals. Both chemicals have caused tumors in animal studies.
- The EPA included PFOA and PFOS on the third Safe Drinking Water Act Contaminant Candidate List (CCL) published in 2009. The CCL is a list of contaminants that are known or anticipated to occur in drinking water that may require regulation.
- The EPA also included PFOA and PFOS in the list of chemicals contained in the third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, published in 2012. UCMR helps the agency to characterize the levels at which particular unregulated contaminants are occurring in drinking water and measure the frequency of that occurrence across approximately 5,000 public water systems nationwide. UCMR 3 monitoring concluded in December 2015 and monitoring results are available on the EPA's website.
- The EPA issued provisional health advisories in 2009 for PFOA and PFOS to provide guidance on protecting people against potential risk from short-term exposure to these chemicals through drinking water.
- The EPA issued final health advisories in spring 2016 for both PFOA and PFOS that replace the 2009 provisional advisories. The final advisories provide a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS from drinking water. The health advisories were established at 70 parts per trillion.
- The EPA has not made a regulatory determination about whether or not to initiate the process to regulate PFOA or PFOS in drinking water. To make that decision, the EPA will consider information such as the occurrence data from UCMR 3 and the peer reviewed health effects assessment supporting the PFOA and PFOS health advisories.
- Eight companies entered a voluntary agreement to phase out production of PFOA, PFOS, and chemicals that degrade to PFOA and PFOS by the end of 2015.
- Hoosick Falls in NY is the site of a former manufacturer of PFOA tapes, foams, and plastics. PFOA and vinyl chloride have been found in ground water. The public water supply is undrinkable and bottled water is being provided.

TALKING POINTS:

- The EPA is conducting the scientific data collection and analysis called for in the Safe Drinking Water Act to evaluate unregulated contaminants such as PFOA and PFOS.
- The EPA published a final lifetime drinking water health advisory for PFOA and PFOS in 2016 as a benchmark to assist states and tribes.
- Data from 5,000 public drinking water systems will help us understand how often these unregulated contaminants or chemicals occur in drinking water.
- The EPA is working with state and local partners to address PFOA/PFOS found in water supplies in communities such as Hoosick Falls, NY.